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ALIEN WORLDS™

WWSport 194
NO.3



Steve Oliff



STRATOSPHERIC SCRIBBLINGS

c/o PACIFIC COMICS / 8423 Production Ave. / San Diego, CA 92121

Dear Bruce,

Congratulations on *Alien Worlds* which is exactly what you intended it to be—the best thing of its kind since the glory days of EC. Artwork by Williamson, Mayenk, Redondo, and Conrad—all excellent. As for your scribbling, let me just say that I have consistently enjoyed your work since I first discovered it in the pages of *Ka-Zar*. I particularly admired "Talk to Tedi." I leave you with two words of advice: GET KALUTAI!

C. Jerry Kutner
North Hollywood, CA

Dear Bruce,

From cover to cover, *Alien Worlds* #1 is an excellent comic. I enjoyed all the stories. I hesitate to use the word "comic," because I do not think of *Alien Worlds* as a comic. I hope somebody out there has a name for this wonderful something.

I read about the new color-reproducing method used on the first story, and I'm in favor of it being used again. It added to the overall effect of the story.

I am looking forward to future issues of *Alien Worlds*.
Steven Thomas
South Yeater, Room 317
Warrensburg, MO 64093

Dear Mr. Jones,

When I first heard about Pacific Comics, I must admit I thought that you guys would flop. Thanks for proving me wrong. Seeing the cover for *Alien Worlds* #1 was a break. It caught my eye (I'm sure you know why). I took a chance and hoped it'd be like a heavy *Metal*-type format. It wasn't. It was better! Being a sci-fi-horror movie fan I found the stories weird, very unpredictable, and overall great. The art was superbly done. You people at Pacific hooked a loyal reader. Keep up the great work (I know I won't have to worry about that).

Aldis Rapsys
7131 S. Richmond Ave
Chicago, IL 60629

To the Crew of *Alien Worlds*,

Just beautiful! I have just finished with the first issue

of *Alien Worlds*. All I can say is terrific. It's about time that someone(s) published a comic with some heart and soul in it. The stories were quite intriguing. I enjoy stories with a different twist to the ending. I liked "Talk to Tedi," and thought it was a really heart-warming. The art in this issue was impeccable-incomparable.

To Bruce Jones: I tend to agree with your philosophy of non-continuity. This tends to make for a more intriguing, more thought-provoking comic. This would also let the writers have more freedom with their ideas—more flexibility. They wouldn't have to worry about keeping the character(s) alive or not. Science fiction was not meant to be long and tedious, least of all predictable. Predictability leads to boredom. Keep up the superb work.

Don't let *Alien Worlds* become just another comic. This comic is really worth buying and reading. Hurray for Pacific—the NEW era in comics!

Carlton Lee
2476 Narcissus St.
Hon, HI 96816

Dear Bruce,

First, let me congratulate you on your two new titles. *Twisted Tales* and *Alien Worlds* compare with nothing currently being produced and I enjoy them both immensely.

Alien Worlds #2 was a top-notch production. All three stories were superb, though Dave Stevens has stolen the show once again. His art was totally magnificent! From the seductive beauty of Aurora herself, to the wonderful expressions on the silent Unk, this episode was a real gem. There was no positive indication that you were going to continue the Aurora stories, but you simply must! If there are remaining Aurora stories in the vaults, please let us see them. If not, can Dave be persuaded to continue them? Don't leave us hanging!

Gerry Woodling
228 Auburn Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

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WE WERE ALIENS; CREATURES FROM ANOTHER WORLD CAME TO THE SALVATION, NOT OF HUMANKIND, BUT OF THE PLANET ITSELF. MAN HAD WROUGHT MUCH DESTRUCTION HERE, MUCH NEAR-IRREVERSIBLE CHAOS. THE PLANET EARTH NEEDED AN INTELLIGENT FORCE TO RIGHT THOSE TERRIBLE WRONGS, TO MAKE PARCHED, BURN'T HILLS GREEN AGAIN FOR LESS INTELLIGENT, BUT NO LESS DESERVING, CREATURES THE OWL, THE BEAR, THE ELK, THE RODENT. COULD NOT DO THESE THINGS FOR THEMSELVES. IT WAS THE JOB OF A SPECIES NOT OF THIS LAND, AND WE ACCEPTED THE TASK WILLINGLY...

FOR WE HAD WATCHED FROM AFAR... AND WE HAD GROWN TO LOVE THE GREEN HILLS... PERHAPS EVEN MORE THAN MAN HAD...

BESIDES...ARE NOT ALL THINKING CREATURES BROTHERS?

THE INHERITORS

WE STARED UPWARD AT THE MYRIAD PINPOINT LAMPS WINKING SOFTLY BACK AT US. THE FORCE THAT HAD BROUGHT US TO THIS STRANGE LAND WE HAD BURIED FOREVER IN THE DARK SEA. THAT NO TRACE OF IT MIGHT EVER BE FOUND AGAIN...

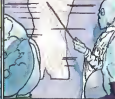
FOR WE WERE THE INHERITORS, THE SUCCESSORS TO MAN.
AND IT WAS OUR DECISION TO LOOK AND ACT AS MUCH
LIKE HIM AS POSSIBLE...

WE LIVED IN THE BUBBLE, SLEPT IN THE BUBBLE,
UNDERWENT OUR *OPERATIONS* IN THE BUBBLE...

OPERATIONS THAT MADE US
LOOK MORE AND MORE *HUMAN*!
AS THE WEEKS WENT BY, WE
STUDIED IN THE BUBBLE...
LEARNED THE WAYS OF MAN...



TO THAT END, WE SOUGHT TO RELINQUISH ANY
TIES TO OUR HOMELAND: ANY MEMORIES OF
WHENCE WE HAD COME, WHO WE WERE—
WHAT WE LOOKED LIKE! ONLY THE BUBBLE
REMAINED WITH US...



WE HAD ATTEMPTED TO
CONTACT MAN BEFORE
—TO WARN HIM OF THE
COMING HOLOCAUST
SHOULD HE CONTINUE
HIS PRESENT PATH.
BUT ALTHOUGH HE
HEARD US, HE DID
NOT UNDERSTAND US.
FOR OUR LANGUAGES
WERE WORLDS APART
MAN SPOKE WITH HIS
LIPS...



YET MAN HAD
DEVELOPED WELL ON
HIS PLANET, COME
FAR BEFORE THE
GREAT FIRESTORM
TO BE AS SUCCESS-
FUL AS MAN, WE
HAD TO BECOME
LIKE MAN. WE
NEEDED FIVE
FINGERS...
STRONG LEGS.
EXTERNAL
GENITALIA...
AND A NEW
WAY OF BREATHING...



THE PHYSICIANS WHO CAME
WITH US SPENT MANY HOURS
AT THE SURGICAL TABLES. IT
WAS SOMETIMES PAINFUL AND
ALWAYS DIFFICULT FOR THERE
WERE ALMOST NO LIVING MEN
TO SERVE AS MODELS...



...ALMOST...



ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE, ONE WOULD STUMBLE INTO OUR CAMP... IT WAS ALWAYS A TIME OF GREAT SADNESS... AND DANGER...



WE UNDERSTOOD NOT MAN'S PROPENSITY FOR DESTRUCTION... NOR THE MEANS TO RETALIATE AGAINST IT. LIFE WAS SACRED TO US... EVEN MAN'S...



USUALLY, ONCE THE WRETCHED CREATURE'S WRATH WAS SPENT...



...IT EITHER SHAMBLED OFF AGAIN, OR DIED QUIETLY, ITS SYSTEM SUCCEUNING AT LAST TO THE NUCLEAR POISONS SWIMMING WITHIN IT...



OUR ONE CONSOLATION WAS THE DETAILED ANATOMICAL MODEL ITS BODY WOULD SUPPLY TO OUR PHYSICIANS... EACH DAY WE LEARNED MORE ABOUT THE CREATURES WE WERE BECOMING...



EACH NIGHT WE WOULD GATHER BEFORE A GREAT BONFIRE AND THE YOUNG OF US WOULD QUESTION THE ELDERS...

WHY CANNOT WE SING THE SOUL SONGS ON TEACHER?

IT IS NO LONGER PERMITTED, BETH. IT IS A REMINDER OF WHAT WE WERE...

WE ARE THE DOMINANT SPECIES OF THE PLANET EARTH NOW. WE MUST LEARN TO WALK ON MAN'S LAND... BREATHE HIS AIR... SING HIS SONGS... WE CANNOT GO BACK... EVER.

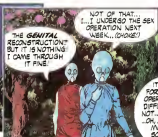




THE DAYS PASSED.
BETH AND I ROAMED
THE COASTLINE TO-
GETHER, TRYING OUT
OUR STRANGE NEW
LESSON...

OH ARD, I AM
FRIGHTENED...

NO, BETH,
YOU'RE DOING
WELL... YOU WALK
ALMOST HUMAN
NOW.



THE **GENITAL**
RECONSTRUCTION!
BUT IT IS NOTHING!
I CAME THROUGH
IT FINE!

NOT OF THAT...
I... I UNDERGO THE SEX
OPERATION NEXT
WEEK... (CHOKES!)



IT IS DIFFERENT
FOR FEMALES. THE
OPERATION IS MORE
DIFFICULT. IF... IF I DO
NOT... IF THEY CANNOT
...OH, ARD! THEY MIGHT
MATE YOU WITH
SOMEONE ELSE!



THEY WILL MATE
ME WITH YOU! SWEET
BETH, WE WILL SPEND
OUR LIFETIMES TOGETHER!
I PROMISE YOU!



OH ARD, I WANT
SO MUCH TO BE
HUMAN! PUT
YOUR MOUTH ON
MINE, ARD! KISS
ME LIKE THE
HUMANS USED TO
KISS! PLEASE!



I WAS OUT GATHERING
FRUIT WITH THE OTHERS
THE NEXT DAY WHEN
ANOTHER OF THE CRAZED
HUMANS ATTACKED...

AGGH

COMMIE BASTARDS!
DROP MISSILES ON US.
WILL YA!

NO!

ARD!

BUT--

WE ARE
CREATURES
OF PEACE.
ARD...DO NOT
INTERFERE...



COMMIE
SCUM! THAT'LL
LEARN YA! GOTTA
KEEP THE NATION
PURE!



ARD!
ARD! COME
QUICKLY!







MY THOUGHTS WERE WITH BETH...YET KATH WAS SWEET AND GENTLE. I TRIED TO THINK ONLY OF MY BIOLOGY LESSONS AS SHE EMBRACED ME THERE ON THE GRASS...



I HAD DONE A TERRIBLE THING. I HAD GONE AGAINST ALL MY TEACHINGS AT THE BUBBLE...



PERHAPS...
PERHAPS WE'RE
BECOMING MORE
HUMAN THAN
WE KNOW, KATH...



AND
LOOK!

THEY HAVE
SEEN, KATH, AND
THEY KNOW... THEY
KNOW THAT WE
HAVE FAILED
HERE...

I MUST TELL TEACHER
...I MUST TELL THE
OTHERS OF THIS
AWFUL THING I HAVE
DONE. WE MUST
GO BACK TO OUR
OWN WORLD...



AND
WAIT!

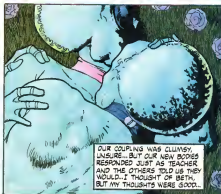
PERHAPS WE ARE
BECOMING MORE HUMAN, BUT
DONT THAT WHAT THE GROUP
WANTED? PERHAPS THAT'S
WHAT IT TAKES TO LIVE IN
THE WORLD OF DRY AIR
AND ROUGH SOIL. MAN
WANTED TO COMMUNICATE
WITH US. AND
HE WAS COMPASSION-
ATE AS
WELL AS VIOLENT.



IT WAS AS
MUCH OUR
FAILURE AS
MAN'S THAT NO
COMMUNICATION
WAS MADE! LET
US NOT FAIL HIM
AGAIN, AND
LET US MAKE
THIS WORLD
GREEN
AGAIN,
FOR ALL
OF US.



AND LET US
REPLACE THE BROKEN
LIFE YOU HAVE
TAKEN THIS DAY... WITH
A NEW YOUNG LIFE OF
OUR OWN MAKING...



OUR COUPLING WAS CLUMSY,
UNSURE... BUT OUR NEW BODIES
RESPONDED JUST AS TEACHER
AND THE OTHERS TOLD US THEY
WOULD... I THOUGHT OF BETH,
BUT MY THOUGHTS WERE GOOD...

LATER, WE DESCENDED THE HILL TO THE BEACH, WHERE TEACHER WAS CALLING ANOTHER MEETING...

TOMORROW YOU WILL UNDERGO THE FINAL OPERATION LINKING YOU FOREVER WITH THE HUMAN RACE: THE OPERATION TO SEAL YOUR BREATHING HOLE.



I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU MISS YOUR HOME, YOUR FRIENDS, HOW MUCH YOU'D LIKE TO BE AMONG THEM AGAIN...I HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO REMOVE YOUR COLLARS ONE DAY EARLY:



A GASP OF ELATION WENT UP FROM THE GROUP AS THE KEY WAS PASSED AROUND. A GREAT RUSH OF AIR ENTERED MY LUNGS AS THE COLLAR WAS PULLED FREE...

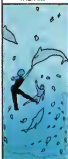
RUN, MY CHILDREN! RUN AND BE FREE ONE LAST TIME!



I DIVED INTO THE SURF WITH KATH, SQUIRTING A GREAT GUYSER OF WATER FROM MY BLOWHOLE. A BILLION VOICES SANG JOYFULLY AS WE LEAPED PLAYFULLY AMONG OUR CHILDHOOD FRIENDS...HOME AT LAST!



O LET US RETURN TO THE GREEN ROLLING WAVES, O LET US SWIM TO EMBRACE THEM; O LET US GO FORTH THROUGH THE DEEP BLUE BRINE, FIND THE WIND AND THE SUN AND CHASE THEM...



O LET US STAY CLOSE IN THIS WORLD OF OUR BIRTH, O LET OUR SIX BILLION BE ONE; THROUGH THIS SONG THAT WE SING IN THE CLEAR OCEAN AIR, OVER ENDLESS GREEN WAVES THAT WE LOVE...





Somerset Holmes

**ALONE
VULNERABLE
TERRIFIED**

She doesn't know
who she is

Where she came from

... or why they're
trying to kill her!

JONES & ANDERSON THIS SUMMER FROM



PI IN THE SKY

A GOOD MORNING, A GOOD DAY FOR THE HUNT! **GREEN DRAGON** EASED BACK IN HIS SHOCK CHAIR WITH A GRIN, ADJUSTING HIS GLARE GOGGLES, AND PUSHED THE JOY STICK INTO THE PINK ZONE. HIS **PHANTOM SEVEN X94 SABRE SHAWK** SHRIEKED EXALTANTLY FROM ITS TURBO-THRUSTERS, DISCHARGED A THREAD OF GREEN VAPOR, AND BANKED SOFTLY OVER THE PURPLE MOUNTAIN TOPS AT THREE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND.

IT WAS HIGH TIME THE **PRINCESS** WAS BACK WHERE SHE BELONGED. HIGH TIME. HE WATCHED HER TRIM FIGURE WALKING GRACEFULLY AMONG THE MARBLE HALLS OF HIS DOMAIN. HIGH TIME SHE CURL'D UP BESIDE HIM IN BED AT NIGHT...AND HE NUTZLED HER SWIM NECK, CARESSED HER FIRM FLANKS...

JUST SOUTH OF MIRA MESA HE GOT TIRED OF THE **PHANTOM SEVEN X94** AND PUNCHED IN THE GREEN-AND-YELLOW BUTTON ON THE CEILING CONSOLE ABOVE HIS HEAD: TIME FOR SOME **SKY WRITING!**

THE **PHANTOM SEVEN** RETRACTED ITS SUICIDE-WINGS, ARCHED ITS ALLOY BACK, KICKED OUT A PAIR OF RAZOR-SHARP CUTTER FOILS, AND SPROUTED EIGHT ALUMINUM HYDRO-TUBES BENEATH ITS REAR THRUSTERS.

ALL OF WHICH BEGAN TO POUR A KNIFE-EDGED STREAM OF PURE, SPARKLING SNOW-VAPOR. **GREEN DRAGON** EASED INTO THE JOY STICK AND BEGAN TO WRITE:

GREEN DRAGON LAUGHED HOLLOWSLY WITHIN HIS GLEAMING SHOCK-HELMET. WAIT UNTIL THAT JACK-SEARED SWAMP RAT SAW THIS!

THERED
BEAR STINKS!

HE WAS JUST SHOVING HER BACK INTO G-SPEED AND PREPARING TO LEVEL OUT WHEN THE FIRST BOLT OF LASER FIRE SEARED ACROSS HIS BOW!

BASTARD!
SNEAKING UP
ON ME!

GREEN DRAGON WOULD BARELY HAVE TIME TO HIT THE ORANGE CONSOLE BUTTONS BEFORE **SKYWRITER** SWASHED INTO THE MOUNTAIN RANGE BELOW. ALUMINUM HYDRO-TUBES SNAPPED BACK. THE LIGHT-HEARTED CUTTER FOILS RETRACTED, REPLACING THEMSELVES WITH A SERIES OF HUGE **HYPERVOR** FIGHTER WINGS. ALL SIX BRISTLING WITH AN ARMYADA OF LASER CANNONS AND VEEP-TORPEDOS. THE GREEN HULL OF THE **SKYWRITER** VANISHED TOO, AND IN ITS PLACE WAS THE SAVAGE SWEEPING LINES OF A **MARK NINE CLOUD WHOMPER!**



AND NOW **GREEN DRAGON** SAW HIM-- SKIMMING SMARTLY ALONG BENEATH THAT LINE OF CUMULUS NUBLES: IN A BRAND NEW **SAND SHARK SEV-**--WITH MAGNA-DRIVE AND BLISTER BOMBS!



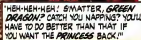
CHRIST! HOW HAD **RED BEAR** MANAGED THAT?



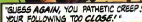
NO TIME TO CONTEMPLATE THAT NOW, THE BIG **RED SHARK** WAS PRYING ITS VACU-RIFLES AND GETTING OFF A SALVO AT HIS STAR-BOARD STABILIZER! NOTHING TO DO BUT THROW HER INTO FLICK-NU-JUMP AND HOPE THE LONER SHIELDS HELD!



GREEN DRAGON SKIPPED ACROSS THE LUSH VALLEY ON TWO WINGS, BANKED OVER THE LINE OF FIR TREES BY LAKE MOOSE, AND SPIRALED STRAIGHT INTO THE SUN TO TRY AND GAIN TIME. TOO LATE, ONE OF **RED BEAR'S** BLISTER BOMBS DISINTEGRATED HIS FORWARD FOIL. HE WASN'T IN SERIOUS INTERNAL TROUBLE, BUT THAT FOIL WOULD CUT HIM BACK TO HALF-SPEED! DAMN!



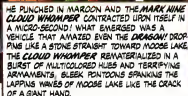
"HEH-HEH-HEH! SMATTER, **GREEN DRAGON**? CATCH YOU NAPPING? YOU'LL HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT IF YOU WANT THE **PRINCESS** BACK!"



"GUESS AGAIN, YOU PATHETIC CREEP! YOUR FOLLOWING TOO CLOSE!"



AND IT WAS TRUE! **RED BEAR**, PRESSING HIS ADVANTAGE, HAD ALL BUT CRANKED UP **GREEN'S** TAIL PIPES, BUT THE OLD **DRAGON** WASN'T ABOUT TO GO DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT!



HE PUNCHED IN MAROON AND THE **MARK NINE CLOUD WHIMPER** CONTRACTED UPON ITSELF IN A MICRO-SECOND! WHAT EMERGED WAS A VEHICLE THAT AMAZED EVEN THE **DRAGON**: DROP PING LIKE A STONE STRAIGHT TOWARD MOOSE LAKE. THE **CLOUD WHIMPER** REMATERIALIZED IN A BURST OF MULTICOLORED HUES AND TERRIFYING ARMAMENTS, BLEEK PANTOONS SPANKING THE LAPPING WAVES OF MOOSE LAKE LIKE THE CRACK OF A GANT HAND.

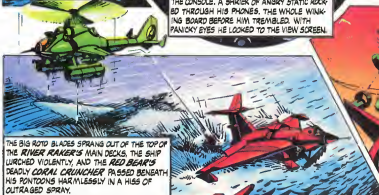


A **CYLLIS SEVEN RIVER RAKER**! THE FASTEST, MOST DEADLY WATER-CRAFT IN THE UNIVERSE!



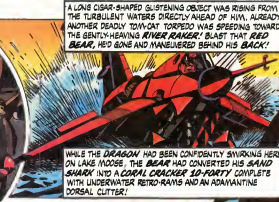
PANCAKING DOWN ON A LAKE WAS THE LAST THING **RED BEAR** HAD EXPECTED FROM HIM. THIS WOULD GIVE THE **DRAGON** NOT ONLY TIME TO MAKE NECESSARY DAMAGE REPAIRS, BUT FLOATING HERE ON THE ROCKY SURFACE HELPED SAVE PRECIOUS ENERGY! NOW ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS—

GREEN DRAGON WAS NEARLY KNOCKED FROM THE CONSOLE. A SHRIEK OF ANGRY STATIC RANGED THROUGH HIS PHONES. THE WHOLE WINKING BOARD BEFORE HIM TREMBLED. WITH PANICKY EYES HE LOOKED TO THE VIEW SCREEN.



THE BIG ROTOR BLADES SPRAWS OUT OF THE TOP OF THE **RIVER RAKER'S** MAIN DECKS. THE SHIP WURCHED VIOLENTLY, AND THE **RED BEAR'S** DEADLY **CORAL CRUNCHER** PASSED BENEATH HIS PONTONS HARMLESSLY IN A HISS OF OUTRAGED SPRAY.

HARDLY TIME FOR BACK-PATINGS, THOUGH! UP ON **DRAGON'S** STERN, GAINING FAST WAS THE BIGGEST, MEANEST, **BULL DOG BASHER** THE **DRAGON** HAD EVER SEEN! OLD **BEAR-BUTT** WAS CERTAINLY QUICK WITH THE BUTTONS TODAY!



A LONG CISAR-SHAPED GUSTENING OBJECT WAS RISING FROM THE TURBULENT WATERS DIRECTLY AHEAD OF HIM, ALREADY ANOTHER DEADLY TOM-CAT TORPEDO WAS SPEEDING TOWARD THE GENTLY-HEAVING **RIVER RAKER**! BLAST THAT **RED BEAR**, HE'D GONE AND MANEUVERED BEHIND HIS BACK!

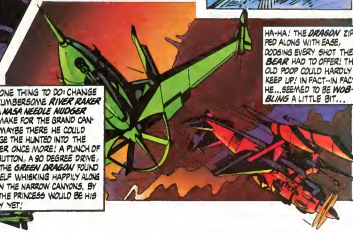
WHILE THE **DRAGON** HAD BEEN CONFIDENTLY SNORKLING HERE ON LAKE MODES, THE **BEAR** HAD CONVERTED HIS **SAND SHARK** INTO A **CORAL CRACKER 10-FORTY** COMPLETE WITH UNDERWATER RETRO-RAMS AND AN ADAMANTINE DORSAL CUTTER!



QUICK NOW, WHILE THE **BEAR** WAS OFF-GUARD! LOOSEN A BANK OF BLUE BOMBS ON HIS ROOF AND CUT FREE OF THE ATMOSPHERE! IN SECONDS THE **DRAGON** WAS STREAKING CONFIDENTLY THROUGH THE STRATOSPHERE AGAIN WHILE THE **BEAR** WALLOWED IN A CLOUD OF PUTRID GAS! MORE HUMILIATION THAN HARM, PERHAPS, BUT IT GAINED HIM PRECIOUS SECONDS!



ONLY ONE THING TO DO: CHANGE THE CUMBERSOME **RIVER RAKER** INTO A **NASA NEEDLE NUGGER** AND MAKE FOR THE GRAND CANYON! MAYBE THERE HE COULD CHANGE THE HUNTED INTO THE HUNTER ONCE MORE! A PUNCH OF THE BUTTON. A 90 DEGREE DIVE, AND THE **GREEN DRAGON** FOUND HIMSELF WHISKING HAPPILY ALONG WITHIN THE NARROW CANYONS. BY GOD THE PRINCESS WOULD BE HIS TODAY YET!



NO TIME TO THINK! ONLY TO ACT! HIS LEFT HAND SHOT OUT YANKED DOWN ON THE PEARL-COATED **EMERGENCY-6** TOGGLE AND SHUT OFF ALL THE PROTECTIVE SCREENS AT ONCE. THIS LEFT HIM WIDE OPEN TO IRREPARABLE DAMAGE FROM ATTACK, BUT IT ALSO CUT HIS CHAMELEON CENTERS TO ZERO SPEED.

HA-HA! THE **DRAGON** ZIPPED ALONG WITH EASE, DODGING EVERY SHOT THE **BEAR** HAD TO OFFER! THE OLD POOP COULD HARDLY KEEP UP! IN FACT-IN FACT HE...SEEMED TO BE WAGGLING A LITTLE BIT...

...D-DRAGON.
C-CAN'T HOLD HER...
BLACKING OUT...

WHY? WHAT'S
THE MATTER? IS
THIS A RUSE, RED
BEAR?

HE PUSHED AWAY FROM THE 'CONSOLE' IN
THE CORNER OF HIS BEDROOM AND AIMED
HIS CANE TOWARD THE HALL. HE PUSHED
THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR OF HIS SINGED
LITTLE DUPLEX AND LIMPED DOWN THE
WOODEN RAMP TO THE STREET.

ACROSS THE RUBBLE-STREW SIDE-
WALKS GREEN DRAGON PUSHED HIS
AGED FORM. AT LAST HE CONVERGED
ON A LITTLE SINGED BRICK HOUSE
AT THE END OF THE BLOCK.

...CAN'T
SEE... B-BOBBY...
HELP...

GREEN DRAGON JERKED OFF HIS
SHOCK HELMET, REVEALING THE
AGED AND WRINKLED FACE OF A
BALD-HEADED MAN IN HIS EIGHTIES.

DAMN HEARTY...
SORRY TO LEAVE YOU
LIKE THIS. OLD MAN...
TAKE CARE OF THE
PRINCESS...

GREEN DRAGON SAT QUIETLY
BESIDE RED BEAR'S GARDEN
GRAVE, STARING AT THE RADIO
ACTIVE SKY. IT HURT HIS EYES.
HE DIDN'T WANT TO LOOK UP AT
THAT! SKY HE WANTED TO
LOOK AT THE SKY ON THE 'CON-
SOLE. HE WANTED TO SIT BEHIND
THE VIEWSCREEN OF THE
PHANTOM SEVEN XIV OR
THE CYLIS SEVEN RIVER
RAKER AND DO BATTLE WITH
THE RED BEAR, BUT THAT
WAS NOT TO BE...EVER AGAIN.
THE RED BEAR WAS GONE...

DAN, NO!
YOU CAN'T DIE!
WHAT'LL I
DO??

THE OLD LIPS BARELY UTTER
THE WORDS...THE FINAL WORDS...

...PURPLE BUTTON...

DAN! DAN!
IT'S ME, BOBBY!
I'M HERE!

HE DARTS INSIDE. RED BEAR WAS AT
HIS 'CONSOLE, SLUMPED FORWARD BARELY
BREATHING. HIS 'SHOCK HELMET OFF HIS
WRINKLED, PASTY FACE ALMOST BLUE. HIS
FINGER STILL REACHING FOR THE YELLOW
BUTTON.

A COLD, WET NOSE THRUST INTO
HIS PALM. HE LOOKED DOWN AT
THE PRINCESS' SAD BROWN
EYES AND SCRATCHED THE BIG
IRISH SETTER BEHIND THE EARS.

COME ON, GIRL.
GUESS YOU'RE GOING TO
BE WITH ME FOR GOOD
NOW...

HE STARTED HOME, PRINCESS
TROTTING ALONGSIDE...PURPLE
BUTTON! HE PRESSED, PURPLE
BUTTON! BUT THERE WERE
NO PURPLE BUTTONS ON RED
BEAR'S 'CONSOLE-NOT UNLESS
HE'D INSTALLED ONE!

THE VIEW-SCREEN
LEAPT INTO LIFE!

GREEN DRAGON LIMPED BACK
TO THE BEAR'S HOUSE FRANTI-
CALLY INSIDE, HE LOCATED THE
LITTLE LAVENDER STUD AND
PRESSED IT.

HE WAS IN THE CORAL CRACKER SKIMMING
SWIFTLY OVER THE SURFACE OF LAKE MOOSE. A
RECORDING! RED BEAR HAD MADE RE-
CORDINGS OF ALL THEIR DOGFIGHTS TOGETHER,
AND THERE MUST HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS
OF THEM! ENOUGH TO LAST FOR MONTHS, YEARS!
RED BEAR WASN'T GONE, HE WAS ALIVE
AND WELL RIGHT HERE IN THE 'CONSOLE!

GREEN DRAGON LET OUT A WHOOPE
AND WENT LIMPING FRANTICALLY
OUT THE DOOR AGAIN TOWARD HOME.
PRINCESS BARKED EXCITEDLY BE-
SIDE HIM. GOOD OLD RED BEAR! HE
MUST HAVE KNOWN FOR MONTHS
THAT HE HAD A BAD HEART! HE
PLANNED IT THIS WAY!

BEFORE HE DARTED BACK INSIDE HIS
OWN LITTLE DUPLEX, GREEN DRAGON
GLANCED UP AT THE UGLY, BOILING,
BLOOD-COLORED RADIO-ACTIVE SKY.
THE CLOUDS WERE THICK AND GREEN
AND PREGNANT WITH POISON.

GREEN DRAGON CHUCKLED TO THE
PRINCESS. A GOOD MORNING! A
GOOD DAY FOR THE HUNT!

ISSUE #2

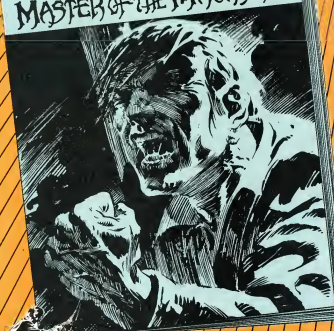


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BERNI WRIGHTSON

MASTER OF THE MACABRE



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DARK PASSAGE

MOSTLY WE LOVED THE ROCKETS
THE ~~ROCKETS~~... AH, THE ~~ROCKETS~~!
ALL SHINY AND TALL AND ~~SHINY~~
AND ~~GLEAMING~~ IN THEIR LAUNCH
CRADLES.

OH, WE LOVED ~~OTHER~~ THINGS, TOO. TRUBY AND I... WE
LOVED THE SMELL OF NEWLY MOWN MISSISSIPPI ~~LAHUS~~
AND THE BITTERSWEET TASTE OF SUMMER'S FIRST
DELICIOUS GLASS OF COLD ~~LEMONADE~~ AND THE WAY
THE CURRENT CHARGED RECKLESSLY AROUND THE
BANKS OF THE WILD ~~WEDD~~...

WE LOVED THE SOUND OF CHURCH BELLS ACROSS THE
VALLEY ON A CLEAR SUNDAY MORN AND THE COOL,
SWEET ~~GRASS~~ FLYING BENEATH OUR BARE FEET AS
WE RAGED WILD AND HOT AND ~~FREE~~ AND ~~JOYOUS~~
ACROSS ~~BUTTER'S~~ FIELD TOWARD THE BIG SPACE
PORT...



T. Yeates

STORY: BRUCE JONES ART: TOM YEATES
Colors: Steve Oliff Letters: Carrie McCarthy

T. YEATES

BUT MOSTLY WE LOVED THE ROCKETS... AH THE ROCKETS!
AND MOSTLY WE LOVED THE BIG SILVER NEEDLE...

I SEE HER
ROB. I SEE HER
SURE MUFF! OH
AIN'T SHE A
BEAUTY?

THERE SHE IS,
TASBY. ...OH, AT HER.
OH, GOLLY...

WILL YOU TAKE
ME WITH YOU,
ROB. WILL YOU?

COURSE I WILL! AIN'T YER BEST PAL? AIN'T
WE BLOOD BROTHERS FOR EVER AND EVER?
DON'T WE MAKE A PLEDGE OF FAITHFULNESS
UNDER THE BIG SYCAMORE IN
BUTTER'S FIELD?

I'M GONNA
FLY THE NEEDLE
SOMEDAY, TASBY.
I'M GONNA BE
RIGHT THERE IN
FIRST CLASS
WITH ALL THE
OTHER IRON FOLK
AND DRINK EXPEN-
SIVE WINES AND
RUN MY HAND
ALONG THE LUSH RED
UPHOLSTERY!

OH,
ROB!

YEEH MY KIND! YEEH GONNA
BE MY WIFE! IT'S YOU I
WANT AND NOBODY ELSE!

...IT (SOS)
WOULDN'T WORK
ROB...WHAT
ABOUT OUR
CHILDREN?

SURE, BUT... SOMEDAY...
SOMEDAY YOU'LL GROW UP,
ROB... SOMEDAY YOU'LL WANT
A WIFE... A GIRL OF YER
OWNY ARND...

DON'T
SAY THAT!
NEVER!

WHAT ABOUT THEM?
LISTEN, I DON'T CARE WHAT
OTHER PEOPLE SAY, OR WHAT
THEY THINK! IT'S YOU AND ME
FOREVER, TASBY. YOU HEAR ME?
JUST LIKE WE SWORE
UNDER THE BIG SYCAMORE!
YOU HEAR ME, TASBYTHUMP?

I... I
HEAR YOU,
ROB
(MUFF)...

WE'LL GO AWAY,
TASBY. YOU AND ME. WE'LL
GO AWAY ON THE SILVER
ARCADE! WE'LL RIDE
FIRST CLASS ALL THE
WAY! YOU'LL SEE!
YOU'LL SEE,
TASBY!



BUT TADSY AND ME, WE NEVER HAD NO PROBLEMS. WHEN WE GOT TIRED OF HEARIN' THE LOCAL GOSSIP, WE'D GO OUT INTO MULLER'S SWAMP AND CHASE MARSH BAK.



I LOVED OLD MR. UKELBY ALMOST AS MUCH AS I LOVED HIS DAUGHTER TRISH... AND I LOVED THE DARK AND TERRIFYING AND WONDERFUL TALES HE SPUN THERE IN THE WARREN AND SECURITY OF HIS LITTLE FRONT ROOM...

...AND THEN THE DEMON-BATS FROM ALTAIR IV DESCENDED ON THE HELPLESS LITTLE SHIP...

...AND THE SURVIVORS OF ROMULUS II THAT NO MAN COULD RESIST AND NO MAN COULD SURVIVE...



HE EVEN LOVED SCHOOL, TRISH AND ME... EVEN THOUGH THAT'S WHERE MOST OF THE TROUBLE STARTED...

HEY WHITAKER, WHAT ARE YA GOIN' WALKIN' WITH HER KIND? AIN'T YOU EVER HEARD THE FACTS OF LIFE?

HAR-HAR-HAR!

MISS WHITAKER HANDS OUT WITH INFERIORS CAUSE HE CAN'T PLEASE THE OTHER GIRLS!

SHE'S NOT INFERIOR, DAWN YOU! SHE'S NOT!

MY BRAVE PRINCE PHOEBUS!

NOBODY CALLS MY GIRLFRIEND INFERIOR!

ROS, NO!

GET HIM, BIPP! KNOCK HIS BARS BACK!



SCHOOL WAS SCHOOL...BUT SATURDAYS WERE SATURDAYS!
TIME FOR MARSH RATS AND LEVONADE AND CANDY STORE
LICORICE AND ROCKETS...AH, THE ROCKETS!



THERE SHE IS
TAISY, THE SILVER
NEEDLE! ALL WASHED
AND SHINY AND READY
TO LEAP UP AND
SHAKE DOWN THE
HEAVENS!

IT'S
BEAUTIFUL,
ROB!

...YOU'RE GETTING
OLDER, SON, GROWING
UP TIME TO START
THINKING OF COLLEGE...
OF...GIRLS OF YOUR
OWN KIND.

BUT I WANT
TAISY. WE'RE GONNA
BE MARRIED.



BUT, ROB, DARLING, IT ISN'T PRACTICAL.
DON'T YOU SEE? YOU'LL WANT CHILDREN
SOMEDAY, YOU'LL WANT--

I'LL WANT TAISY, TAISY! I'LL
ALWAYS WANT HER! WE'RE
GONNA STAY TOGETHER ON
THE BIG SILVER NEEDLE!

THEN THERE CAME THE AWFUL NIGHT I PASSED BY TAISY'S
PLACE AND FOUND OLD MAN UNKLEBY HEAVING WATER AT
HIS SIDE.



MR. UNKLEBY!
MR. UNKLEBY!
WHAT
HAPPENED?



BUNCH OF YOUNG ROUGHNECKS...CAME
ACROSS THE TRACKS YELLOW AND WHORNY
...CARRYING TORCHES...MOOLASANS...

TAISY!
WHERE'S
TAISY?



TAISY WAS IN THE BARN
...WHERE THEY HAD
CHASSED HER...

TAISY!
NO!



OH, GOD!
I'LL KILL THEM!
I'LL KILL THEM!

BABY SON...
THAT WON'T HELP
NONE...

IT TOOK US OVER TWO HOURS TO REASSEMBLE HER... LUCKY NOTHING WAS
SERIOUSLY DAMAGED...

TABBY... HONEY, CAN
YOU HEAR ME?

DON'T BE MAD,
ROB... THEY'RE
JUST KIDS...



THE HARDEST PART
CAME LATER...

I BREAK
THEIR NECKS
I'LL...

WANT YOU TO GO
AWAY ROB... I KNOW
I WANT YOU NEVER
TO COME BACK.



TABBY!
ARE YOU
DEAD?

THEY'LL HURT
YOU, ROB (SHE) ONE
DAY THEY MIGHT HURT
YOU DEAD! THERE
JUST KIDS NOW, BUT
THEY'LL GROW UP
AND THEY'LL HATE
YOU AS MUCH AS
THEY HATE ME!

THEY'RE CALLING YOU A FREAK, ROB! THEY'RE
CALLING US BOTH FREAKS! I'M TIRED OF IT,
DO YOU HEAR? I'M SICK OF IT! I DON'T
WANT TO BE A FREAK! I DON'T WANT
PEOPLE GETTING HURT! I WANT YOU
TO GO ROB! NOW! NOW!



AND YOU'RE GROWING UP, ROB, YOU'RE
GETTING OLDER! DON'T YOU SEE?
YOU'LL GROW, BUT I'LL ALWAYS BE
THIRTEEN, ALWAYS! OUR KIND
WASNT MEANT TO BE
TOGETHER, ROB, NOT
PAST CHILDHOOD!



I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT, NOT TABBY! I
SCREAMED AT HER, SHOUTED NAMES
AT HER, SAID TERRIBLE THINGS
THEN I SAW... I RAN OFF OLD MAN
WHEELS, RAN INTO THE NIGHT, I RAN
ACROSS BUTTER'S FIELD TO THE BIG
ROCKET PORT TO THE SILVER NEEDLE.



HERE, HERE, SONNY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YER GON'?

I (GASP) I'M GON' TO MAKE OR MAKE BETTER! I'M GONNA ROS THE SILVER NEEDLE! (GASP) WHERE IS IT?

THE SILVER NEEDLE? WHY, SHE'S IN GYF DOCK SON, AIN'T YOU HEARD? THEY SCRAPPIED THE WHOLE FLEET! YEP, REPLACED HER LAST WEEK WITH ONE OF THE SMALLER SECOND LINES!

NO!
(GASP-JOB)
NO!!

I LAY IN JITTER'S FIELD ALL NIGHT CRYING MY EYES OUT. WHEN THE DAWN SUN BROKE THROUGH THE STARS, I WALKED HOME TO MY PARENTS. I NEVER CROSSED THE TRACKS TO TRIS'S PLACE AGAIN...

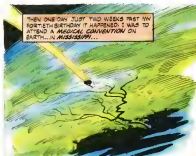
A MONTH LATER WE MOVED TO VENUS... BUT NOT ABOARD THE SILVER NEEDLE. IT WAS GONE FOREVER. I ATTENDED A NEW SCHOOL... MADE NEW BOYFRIENDS, NEW GIRLFRIENDS... STARTED COLLEGE...

MEDICINE FOUND ME. I WORKED HARD, GRADUATED WITH HONORS. I MARRIED A YOUNG WOMAN FROM CYLIS DE... WE MONEY-MOONED ON PHOBOS, EVENTUALLY SETTLING DOWN THERE...

MY PRACTICE FLOURISHED. I DID WELL. JEAN AND I HAD THREE CHILDREN. ALL BOYS. LIFE MOVED ALONG... I MOVED WITH IT...

ROS MONEY?
(GAWW) IT'S 3 A.M.:
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

NOTHING...
WATCHING THE STARS...



THEN ONE DAY JUST TWO WEEKS PRET HY FORTIETH BIRTHDAY IT HAPPENED. I WAS TO ATTEND A WORLDWIDE CONVENTION ON EARTH... IN MISSISSIPPI...

I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH THE LITTLE TOWN OF TARBON HAD CHANGED. AFTER THE CONVENTION I HAILED AN AERO-CAB AND HEADED FOR OLD MAN LUKLEY'S ADDRESS...



SIXTEEN BUCKS WAC

KEEP THE CHANGE.

TARBON ON THE WHOLE HAD CHANGED RADICALLY... BUT SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE...



LAND O'WINDY, THE WHITAKER BOY!

MR. LUKLEY, YOU RECOGNIZED ME!

HEH-HEH. THESE OLD ROBOT EYES STILL HAVE A FEW GOOD PHOTO CELLS IN 'EM. COME IN, SON! HOW YOU BEIN'?



MR. LUKLEY? ARE YOU THERE?

RAP RAP RAP

WE HAD A CLASS OF MR. LUKLEY'S LEMONADE AND THEN HE DIDN'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE ANY LONGER...



SHE'S GONE, SON. SHE'S GONE. THE GOVERNMENT'S TERMINATING ALL THE ROBOTS ON EARTH, STARTING WITH THE YOUNGEST MOODELS. SEEMS LIKE PEOPLE JUST DON'T WANT US NO MORE. COULDN'T STAND WATCHING US STAY YOUNG WHILE THEY GROWNED OLD...

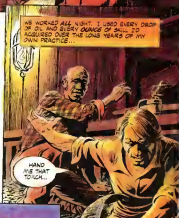


TASKY...

THEY ONLY KEEP ME RUNNING TO MAINTAIN THIS HERE PROPERTY. HEH-HEH. BUT I FORMED 'EM. HEH-HEH. CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET, BOY? GONNA GOING WITH ME?



TOOK HER TO THE FARMHOUSE THEY DID. GONNA MELT HER DOWN. HEH-HEH. BUT I STOLE HER BACK WHEN THEY WASN'T LOOKIN'!



WE TOOK HER APART AND REASSEMBLED HER **THREE** TIMES THEN, JUST AT DAWN...

I FLIPPED THE LITTLE RED SWITCH IN HER BACK...

HER EYES HALF OPENED. HER LIPS TREMBLED ONCE... BUT THAT WAS ALL... ONLY BUSINESS FOLLOWED...



WE WALKED FROM THE BARN...

THANKS FOR THE
LEMONADE, MR. UKELBY...

MR. WHITAKER, SIR,
WANT A SPELL?

DON'T GO FEELIN' BAD ABOUT
IT, SON. I GOT TO TELL YOU
SOMETHIN'. I BEEN THINKIN':
SHE AIN'T GONE, TAISSY AIN'T
GONE AT ALL! SHE WAS,
UNTIL TONIGHT, BUT WE
GOT HER **BACK**, DON'T
YOU SEE?

TONIGHT WHEN WE WAS WORKIN'
AWAY IN THERE, I HAD **HOPES** AGAIN.
YES, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN **YEARS**!
I HAD HOPES TAISSY WOULD LIVE AGAIN
AND THEN ALL A SUDDEN SHE **DID**
LIVE AGAIN IN MY **ARM**! IN MY
MEMORIES! AND I THOUGHT TO
MYSELF WHILE WE WAS WORKIN'
IN THERE, I THOUGHT IT DON'T
MATTER IF SHE WAKES UP
AGAIN OR NOT 'CAUSE SHE
AIN'T NEVER GONNA DIE
IN MY MEMORIES. SHE'S
GONNA BE WITH ME
ALWAYS!

AIN'T THAT THE WAY IT IS, MR. WHITAKER; **PLEASE**
TELL ME, I GOT TO **KNOW**! I GOT TO FEEL, SHE'S
STILL ALIVE! YOU GONNA BE GONE TOO SOMEDAY
BUT I GOT TO LIVE WITH IT **FOREVER!**

YEAH...THAT'S
THE WAY IT IS,
MR. UKELBY...SHE'S
STILL ALIVE...

I CUGHT A CAB BACK
TO TOWN! THAT'S WHEN
I SAW IT...

HEY, STOP THE CAB!
LOOK AT THAT! THE
SILVER ANGEL! IT'S
BACK!

YEAH, BROUGHT
HER OUT OF DRY DOCK
LAST WEEK. LOT OF
PEOPLE **MISSED**
HER, THEY SAY...

I GOT OUT AND RAN...I RAN
THROUGH THE COOL SWEET
GRASS OF **BUTTER'S FIELD**...
I RAN TOWARD THE **ROCKETS**
AH, THE **ROCKETS**, ALL SHINY
AND TALL AND SILVERY AND
GLIMMERING IN THEIR LAUNCH
CRADLES... I RAN FOR ME
AND TAISSY...

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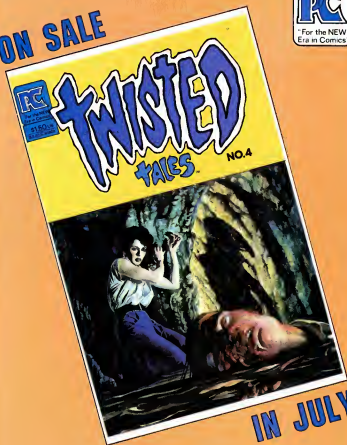
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